

The role of young farmers in a modern rural environment

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1. What a young farmer means

- EU statistics: less than 35
- Young farmer (Pillar 1 – Single farm payments):
sole type of farm holders, less than 40,
- EU policy instruments (Pillar 2- Installation Aid):
mixed with new entrants and less than 40
- New entrant: first time in agriculture as the head of holding, adequate occupational skills and competence, and submit a business plan

1. What a young farmer means

- Difficulties to draw conclusions
- 7,5% under 35 but 14% under 40
- Great qualitative significance of age extension
- Ratio of young to old (over 65) and all farm age
- Great differences among countries
- Purpose: insert young professionals in rural areas (not only owners) who should have a dynamic influence towards innovation

1. What a young farmer means

- Scarce information about young farmers

Accession

Motivation

Socio-economic approaches

- Limited impact of exchange programs
- Period for financing defines them (short to long)

2. Situation in developed countries

- Number of young farmers is diminishing
- It occurs in Europe, USA, Australia, Canada, etc.
- Is it so bad?
- Latest news show a different trend: rural settlements and training
- Greater insertion of women

2. Situation in developed countries

- In between 2007-2013 France accounted for 1/3 of total number of incorporated young farmers (30% without family linkages to agriculture)
- National and regional policies are determinant
- Rate loans better than lump sums
- Early retirements have not encouraged number of new entrants

3. Young farmers' main characteristics

- Lack of money and land
- EU policy has tried to help economically
- Low prestige
- Land constraints and policies are developed nationally and regionally

3. Young farmers' main characteristics

- They are characterised to have:

Greater farms

More productive and efficient enterprises

More sensitive towards environment and
modern practices

Greater diversification of business and
investment decisions

Production of high value added

Distribution through short supply channels

Better training

4. Incorporation of new technology

- Agriculture is highly technological but popular perceptions are the opposite
- A new era of massive incorporation of technology is coming during the next decade
- It will be related to:
 - amount of information (primary and secondary)
 - data collection and analysis (data mining)
 - communication among machines (sensors)
 - and automatisisation (robots)

4. Incorporation of new technology

- Great influence on farming and its disperse physical environment
- More freedom to farmers
- Not necessary to be on the site to exercise control
- Early adopters, most probably young professionals, will benefit most
- They will be influential on other farmers

5. Operating in networks

- Agriculture has been basically an individual activity
- EU policy has reinforced this approach
- Most of new business in other sectors involve groups
- Young entrepreneurs understand it
- They also require quite big assets to start

5. Operating in networks

- Newcomers in agriculture should be looking for more interaction with other farmers moving from individual to collective behaviour
- Business arrangements between new and old farmers is highly desirable (share farming ownership, medium to long term agreements, joint ventures, etc.)

5. Operating in networks

- Not only working networks but social as well
(interaction with rural and urban friends)
- Internet offers a communication means to
change previous patterns
- Young professionals should play leadership
based on technological and social abilities

6. Possible policy implications

- EU should offer more comprehensive policy
- Not only economic arrangements
- Approaches for land access should be included
- Schemes to favour collaboration are important
- Incentives for social leadership in rural areas

6. Possible policy implications

- Measures to enhance rural prestige should be treated
- Balanced training on technological, managerial and entrepreneurial skills to make strategic choices is necessary
- More thorough evaluation and data improvement

Thank you

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